The early childhood education landscape is changing. Local and state requirements for teachers are coalescing toward a national view of expectations for professional preparation.

At the same time, many states are increasing requirements for professional preparation and moving away from the acceptance of informal training to meet them.

One strategy for embracing this new reality is to align in-house training with recognized national standards. Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits, published by Exchange Press, make alignment easy. Each kit includes complete training plans based on articles previously published in Exchange magazine that are cross-referenced with the following American national standards:
Using Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits

- National Association for the Education of Young Children Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria,

- National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation — Initial Licensure,

- Head Start Performance Standards, and

- Accreditation Criteria of the National Accreditation Commission of the National Association for Child Care Professionals.

Because alignment is included in each kit, it is easy to match the professional development needs of teachers to these national standards. Kits cover a broad range of topics including early childhood education, curriculum, environments, family and community partnerships, observation, assessment and documentation, and health and safety. Additional topics specifically address positive discipline and infants and toddlers. A quick look at the list of topics allows administrators to find kits that fit.

As training requirements have increased, so have the requirements for accountability for in-house professional development. Increasingly, licensing agencies, school districts, and training registries are insisting that non-credit professional development experiences have the same or similar components as for-credit academic professional preparation experiences. These components include clearly stated objectives related to what teachers will learn and be able to do as a result of the professional development experiences, the use of appropriate adult learning strategies for instruction, formal assessment of what was learned, and opportunities to apply what was taught and what was learned. All of these components are built in each Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kit.

Changes in the early childhood education professional development landscape have also added increased responsibilities to the already heavy load carried by program directors, principals, and administrators. Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits lighten the load by offering step-by-step instructions for implementing aligned, appropriate professional development experiences. The objectives, preparation steps, additional resources, implementation steps, training strategies, handouts, training resources, assessment, follow-up, and training assessment and evaluation are all included in each kit.

Preparation time for kits is manageable. Many kits require as little as 1.5 hours of advanced preparation and many of these steps, such as duplication of handouts or collection of training supplies, can be delegated to support staff.

Training tips support emerging skills by sharing what the experts know about effective training. Tips focus on improving training knowledge and skills to insure a meaning-
ful professional development experience for participants. An evaluation component supports assessing training effectiveness.

**Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits** can be used most effectively when a clear picture of the individual and program-wide professional development needs of teachers is understood. When a program-wide need is identified, it can often be met by identifying a training kit on that topic and implementing the training session. Training topics that require annual training, such as hand washing hygiene, hygienic environments, exclusion of children with fevers, SIDS, and sun safety are examples of topics for which training kits have been developed that may have program-wide application.

Specialized training is indicated at other times. **Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits** allow trainers to select topics specifically for a sub-set of teachers. Because each kit targets teachers a particular professional development level including beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, trainers can choose the level of complexity that is a perfect fit. This feature also keeps experienced teachers from being left out of the professional development loop. Examples of topics designed especially for advanced teachers include the project approach, facilitating collaborations among children, art experiences for all children, interpreting play to parents, and introduction to action research.

The early childhood field will undoubtedly continue to challenge and change. Resources like **Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits** are one way for program administrators to meet the challenge and continually improve the professional preparation of our teachers.

Kay Albrecht, academic editor of *Exchange*, designed **Out of the Box Early Childhood Training Kits**. As the director of an NAEYC accredited program for 16 years, she longed for resources to support planning and implementing effective professional development experiences for teachers. As an academic, she yearned for interactive, appropriate adult learning resources to keep students engaged and motivated to learn more about early childhood education. When she started a second career as a writer, she collaborated with Exchange Press to leverage their outstanding article archives into resources to support administrators, instructors, and other providers of training in implementing effective professional development experiences for teachers of young children.
List of Training Kits Available

Health and Safety
- Maintaining a Sanitary Environment
- SIDS: Saving Babies in Our Communities
- Hand Hygiene in Early Care and Education Settings
- Becoming a Sun-Safe Early Care and Education Center
- Breastfeeding Promotion in Early Care and Education
- Exclusion of Children with Fevers from Child Care
- Who Needs the Mess? Family-Style Meals

Curriculum Development and Implementation
- The Project Approach in the Early Years
- How Children Build Their Understanding of Numbers
- Essentials of Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Promoting Health Development in the Consumer Culture
- Facilitating Collaborations Among Children
- Learning Through Music: The Support of Brain Research
- Building Character Through Community Service
- Learning Materials for Children of All Abilities
- Choosing Courage in a Climate of Fear
- Art for All Children
- A Joyful Journey to Literacy: The Great Debate
- Play and the Outdoors: What’s New Under the Sun?
- Recycled Materials

Environments
- Supporting Constructive Play in the Wild
- Using Your Senses to Adapt Environments
- Designing and Creating Natural Play Environments
- Programs for Vulnerable Children
- Infants’ and Toddlers’ Learning Environments

Family Partnerships
- Family Conferencing: Developing Trust
- Family Conferencing: Asking and Listening
- Preparing Parents for Change
- Making Families Welcome
- Belonging: Including Children of Gay/Lesbian Parents

Professionalism
- How Do I Relate and Share Professionally?

Early Care and Education
- Granting Children Their Emotions
- Brain Research and Early Childhood Programs
- Nutrition and Child Development
- But They’re Only Playing: Interpreting Play to Parents
- Meaningful Work for Young Children
- An Introduction to Action Research
- Fortune Cookie Philosophy: Using Motivation Effectively

Infants and Toddlers
- Infants Don’t Pretend, Do They?/Seeds of Dramatic Play
- Caring for the Little Ones: Using Sign Language
- Brain Research: Bright Beginnings for Babies

Observation, Assessment, and Documentation
- What Assessment Means to Early Childhood Educators
- The Power of Observation
- Observation: The Primary Tool in Assessment

Positive Discipline
- What’s So Positive About Positive Discipline?
- Docia Shares a Story About Making Rules
- Time Out: How It Is Abused — What It Should Look Like
- Instructive Discipline Is Built on Understanding
- Breaking Our Impulses: Positive Discipline
- Building Spaces, Finding Words
- Hard Joys: Managing Behavior with a Creative Mind
- Not in Praise of Praise
- A Manner of Speaking: Saying I’m Sorry
- Reality Bites: Biting at the Center
- The Impact of Sensory Integration on Behavior

Some kits also available in SPANISH!